

**Claims:**

1. (Original) A method for transmitting control information during transmission of packets, the method comprising:  
transmitting symbols of the packet, the symbols of the packet including in-band symbols; and  
when control information is to be transmitted,  
stopping the transmitting of the symbols of the packet;  
transmitting an out-of-band symbol representing the control information; and  
after the out-of-band symbol is transmitted, continuing with the transmitting of the symbols of the packet that have not yet been transmitted.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the out-of-band symbol is one of two out-of-band symbols that form a primitive.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein one symbol of the primitive has a negative disparity and the other symbol of the primitive has a positive disparity.
4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the primitive has a neutral disparity.
5. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the transmitting of the primitive has minimal effect on running disparity.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the transmitting of the out-of-band symbol has minimal effect on running disparity.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein an in-band symbol is transition optimized and an out-of-band symbol is not transition optimized.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 including receiving the symbols of the packet via one port of a switch and transmitting the symbols of the packet via another port of the switch.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the control information controls communications nodes of a storage area network.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the control information controls a data store device.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the symbols of the packet can include non-contiguous out-of-band symbols and wherein the control information includes contiguous out-of-band symbols.

12. (Original) A method for receiving control information while receiving a packet of symbols, the method comprising:  
receiving a first portion of symbols of the packet, the symbols of the packet being in-band symbols;  
after receiving the first portion of symbols of the packet, receiving an out-of-band symbol representing the control information; and  
after receiving the out-of-band symbol, receiving a second portion of the symbols of the packet  
wherein the control information interrupts the reception of the packet of symbols.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the out-of-band symbol is one symbol of primitive comprising multiple symbols.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the primitive comprises two out-of-band symbols.

15. (Original) The method of claim 12 including combining the first portion of the symbols with the second portion of symbol to form the packet of symbols.

16. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the control information is link control information.

17. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the method is performed by a communications node of a storage link network.

18. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the method is performed by a switch.

19. (Original) A communications device for transmitting control information during transmission of packets, comprising:

a packet transmission component that transmits symbols of the packet, the symbols of the packet being in-band symbols; and

a control transmission component that interrupts the transmission of the symbols of the packet and transmits an out-of-band symbol representing control information

wherein the packet transmission component resumes transmitting the symbols of the packet after transmission of the out-of-band symbol representing control information.

20. (Original) The communications device of claim 19 wherein out-of-band symbol is one of two out-of-band symbols that form a primitive.

21. (Original) The communications device of claim 20 wherein one symbol of the primitive has a negative disparity and the other symbol of the primitive has a positive disparity.

22. (Original) The communications device of claim 20 wherein the primitive has a neutral disparity.

23. (Original) The communications device of claim 20 wherein the transmitting of the primitive has minimal effect on running disparity.

24. (Original) The communications device of claim 19 wherein the transmitting of the out-of-band symbol has minimal effect on running disparity.

25. (Original) The communications device of claim 19 wherein an in-band symbol is transition optimized and an out-of-band symbol is not transition optimized.

26. (Original) The communications device of claim 19 wherein the control information controls communications nodes of a storage link network.

27. (Original) The communications device of claim 19 wherein the control information controls a data store device.

28. (Original) The communications device of claim 19 wherein the symbols of the packet can include non-contiguous out-of-band symbols and wherein the control information includes contiguous out-of-band symbols.